

February 21, 2002

To: Groundfish Vessel Owners and Associations

Partial Reimbursement for Purchases of Safety Equipment and Supplies

One of the projects of the California Groundfish Disaster Response Program provides partial reimbursement to California vessel owners or associations for the costs of meeting fishery observer program safety requirements. In order to qualify for this program, vessel owners must meet one of the following criteria:

- The current owner of a limited entry commercial vessel that landed at least \$5,000 worth or 10,000 pounds of groundfish in each of two years during calendar years 1998, 1999 or 2000, **OR**
- The current owner of a Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) that landed at least 1,000 pieces of groundfish in each of two years during calendar years 1998, 1999 or 2000.

Individuals that wish to seek reimbursement for purchase of safety equipment or supplies should examine the mailing label on this letter for the phrase “may qualify for reimbursement.” If present, this indicates that Department records show the individual’s vessel met the foregoing landing requirement.

The following definitions and conditions apply to this project:

- “Groundfish” includes all species in the federal fishery management plan for west coast groundfish.
- Reimbursements are limited to 50% of the costs incurred in purchasing required safety equipment up to a maximum of \$1,000 per vessel.
- Only current owners of vessels or associations qualify for reimbursement.
- Only safety equipment purchases since September 14, 2000 are eligible for reimbursement.
- Claims will be considered on a first come first served basis until the funds have been expended, but not later than September 30, 2004.
- Eligible equipment and supplies are those that are required by U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations at 46 CFR Part 28.

Current owners of commercial fishing vessels, that do not otherwise qualify, that are asked and agree to carry state or federal fishery observers as part of a data collection project funded under the California Groundfish Disaster Response Program may also qualify for reimbursement. These individuals must apply for reimbursement after they have been approved to carry observers as part of a data collection project.

Each vessel owner requesting reimbursement must attest that the equipment was purchased for the purpose of meeting safety requirements; affirm that s/he will facilitate and cooperate with any request to place a federal or state fishery observer on the vessel; and verify that the vessel will be fully compliant with U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations if an observer is assigned to be placed on the vessel. In accepting payment, the applicant agrees to repay any amounts received, plus court costs and attorneys fees, in the event of noncompliance with the terms and conditions of this project.

Associations that purchased equipment for their eligible members also may request reimbursement. The association representative must complete and sign the attached form and include relevant receipts. The application also must include signatures of each eligible vessel owner in the association attesting that the equipment was purchased for the purpose of meeting safety requirements; affirming that s/he will facilitate and cooperate with any request to place a federal or state fishery observer on the vessel; and verifying that the vessel will be fully compliant with U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations if an observer is assigned to be placed on the vessel.

If you qualify and wish to receive reimbursement, please complete and sign the attached form(s) and include relevant receipts, and mail the completed, signed form(s) and receipts to:

Department of Fish and Game
Intergovernmental Affairs Office
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, California 95814

If your application for reimbursement is denied by the Department of Fish and Game, you may appeal that decision. A Review Committee will consider your appeal and make a recommendation to the Department. Instructions for the appeals process will be provided with letters of denial.

Sincerely,

LB Boydston
Representative

Enclosures: Application Forms and Instructions

cc: Review Committee